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GREEK FORCES & US-ORIGIN ARMS ON CYPRUS

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CIA OSR

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MEMORANDUM

Greek Forces and US-Origin Arms on Cyprus

**MICRO
ONLY**

1960 to Mid-1974

An agreement signed at the time of the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus in 1960 provided for the presence on the island of military contingents from both Greece and Turkey. The two national contingents, 650 Turkish and 950 Greek troops, had the mission of defending the island against external aggression and of training the army of the new state. The development of severe ethnic tensions among the Cypriot population, however, soon led both Greece and Turkey to send additional forces to the island illegally, with the illegal force being sent by Greece being at least ten times larger than the force sent by Turkey.

By 1967 it was estimated that there were at least 7000 Greek troops on the island over and above the 950 permitted by the 1960 agreement. Many of the infantry-type weapons of these troops (pistols, rifles, machine guns,

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rocket launchers, recoilless rifles and mortars) were of US origin, i.e., originally supplied to Greece under the Military Assistance Program. Some of the major armaments were also of US origin.

As a result of the 1967 Cyprus crisis Greece agreed to withdraw the forces illegally on the island and the bulk of them were removed in early 1968. When they left, they took many of their heavy weapons but some of the US-supplied infantry weapons were left behind for use by the Greek Cypriot National Guard (CNG). Following the 1967 crisis both Greece and Turkey continued to maintain small illegal military contingents on the island, principally for the purpose of commanding and training the indigenous Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot military forces.

Prior to the Turkish intervention of July 1974 Greece was maintaining approximately 1650 troops on the island, 950 serving legally with the Hellenic Army Contingent (ELDYK) and 700 illegally with the CNG. Both the ELDYK and the Greek contingent with the CNG were partially armed with infantry-type weapons provided by the US to Greece under MAP. The only major armaments of US origin on the island at the time of the Turkish intervention were 75mm pack howitzers in the CNG.

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After Mid-1974

The number of Greek troops was increased following the outbreak of fighting and in January 1975 may have numbered as many as 2400 men. The troops brought in as reinforcements were partially equipped with infantry-type American weapons. Since that time some decrease in the size of the Greek force has apparently taken place and their current strength is believed to be less than 2000 men.

Since the end of the fighting Greece has continued to provide both the CNG and its own forces on the island with limited amounts of military supplies, including ammunition, small arms and recoilless rifles. Some of these supplies have been US-made.

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